



NATIONAL WINNERS 2006

Centro Colonnades Shopping Centre, SA (BUSINESS)

Demonstrating a multi-level approach that sets a benchmark for all other shopping centres to follow, Centro Colonnades is the national business category winner for its “We’re parting with plastic’ program”. The centre’s Eco -Group worked with retailers, shoppers and local schools to raise awareness of the negative effects of plastic bag use. They also aimed to promote and provide alternative solutions to plastic bag use, as well as running regular environmental promotions and incentives during the year, including its own plastic bag free day.

North Haven Schools, SA (SCHOOLS)

The North Haven ‘Dolphin Rangers’ club was awarded the national school title for their engagement with local community to help protect marine animals in coastal areas. Involving 90 students from the North Haven primary and junior primary school, the club’s work aims to reduce plastic bag use in the local area, particularly working towards assisting the Torrens Island Sunday Market to become plastic bag free. The student’s efforts also raised money for the Port River Dolphin Sanctuary with the students setting up a regular stall and selling 10,000 reusable bags in one month alone. The students also won a competition by creating the slogan “Be fantastic – Lose plastic”, which was printed on 50,000 multi-use bags, promoted and sold across 4 local council areas.

Shire of Esperance, WA (GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY)

The Esperance “Bag Smart Programme” was launched in 2003 and has seen a 75% reduction in the use of plastic shopping bags within the community. Taking a multi-dimensional approach, incorporating public advocacy, community education, school and retail participation and volunteer support, the Shire of Esperance has moved from running plastic bag free days to regular plastic bag free weeks. Using radio, newspaper, TV advertising and editorial to reinforce the ‘Esperance is too Fantastic for Plastic’ motto, the program demonstrates a strong commitment by the community to become plastic bag free. Peak tourist months have been identified as key periods for retail and volunteer efforts, to encourage visitors to help Esperance become plastic bag free.

Redlands Tourism, QLD (COMMUNITY GROUP)

Redlands Tourism auspice the North Stradbroke Island Sustainable Tourism Committee and is dedicated to eradicating plastic bags from North Stradbroke Island. The introduction of cornstarch, biodegradable plastic bags, that suit organic waste recovering systems, was the starting point of the ‘Ban Plastic Bags on Straddie’ campaign. However, realising these were no substitute for reducing excessive usage, the committee also began an education and marketing campaign to change resident and visitor mindsets towards plastic bag usage. Working partnerships were formed with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure its success, including the EPA Qld, Redland Shire council, Redlands Tourism, Tourism Queensland and other key tourism bodies. Independent research assessed the viability of ‘biodegradable’ bags, whilst they also worked with local schools to introduce and facilitate an educational strategy. Their target is to achieve 100% of NSI operators no longer using plastic bags by the end of 2006, which has the support of all key stakeholders.

STATE & TERRITORY WINNERS 2006

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Voyages Yulara (Ayers Rock Resort) (Business)

The Zero Plastic Bags at IGA Yulara campaign tackled the issue of eliminating plastic bags by providing calico shopping bags to local residents, whilst at the same time, introducing a 10 cent levy on biodegradable plastic shopping bags. In seven months the initiative reduced use by over 240,000 plastic bags and by the end of Oct 2005, the supermarket became plastic bag free, by providing paper bags as the alternative. However, these bags continue to have the 10 cent levy to encourage shoppers to bring their own calico bags, or reuse cardboard boxes available from the store. Education of international guests is the only ongoing issue that Voyages Yulara addresses with in-store education and promotion. This could be easily replicated across other resorts.

Arnhemland Progress Association (ALPA) (Community)

Plastic bags were identified more than 10 years ago as a major source of litter in the ALPA's community. As a result the Board banned plastic bags from shops that are either owned, or managed by the ALPA, providing brown paper bags or recycled boxes as an alternative. Local community support was gained for the 'Don't choke the turtles' campaign, by highlighting the danger of plastic bags to marine animals, particularly playing on the strong cultural connection with the sea, and totemic relationships with sea turtles. In communities where the ALPA has the only shop in the town, plastic bags are no longer an issue, and other remote communities are now looking to follow suit.

VICTORIA

Loddon Shire/ Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group, VIC (Community)

Loddon Shire Council, with the support of the Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group and Ellwaste, took on the challenge of encouraging the entire Shire to become plastic shopping bag free. The project involved almost 100 traders from the 11 towns in the Shire who signed on to eliminate plastic bags from the stores and provide other alternatives as a way to reduce plastic bag litter along roadsides and as waste to landfill. Community education campaigns were launched to educate the community about sustainable consumption and promote better recycling and waste minimisation. The project has seen the elimination of over 650,000 single use plastic bags from the traders in the Shire and sets a benchmark that could be rolled out across other Shire Councils in the country

Barwon Regional Waste Management Group (BRWMG), VIC (Government Authority)

The "Go Blue and Keep Anglesea Green – Plastic Bag Free Campaign" was implemented through a partnership between the BRWMG and the Anglesea Neighbourhood Environmental Improvement Plan Group to help Anglesea, become a plastic bag free town. The project assisted traders in making the change from plastic bags to alternatives such as paper or reusable bags to promote behavioural change in residents. 90% of traders became plastic bag free and prevented over 200,000 plastic bags per annum being used. Long term goals are for nearby coastal towns to follow their lead and become plastic bag free.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

City of Holdfast Bay, Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt and Salisbury, SA (Government Authority)

The cities of Holdfast Bay, Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt and Salisbury undertook a regional approach towards eliminating single use plastic bags. Working collaboratively with local communities and schools, the group distributed 50,000 reusable bags in the community by encouraging shoppers to swap 5 single use plastics bags for a reusable bag, or alternatively purchase the bag for \$1. Over 11,300 participants took part, helping eliminate 200,000 bags from the waste stream within the region. The councils followed up their campaign with a community survey to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiative.

Centro Colonnades Shopping Centre, SA (Business – State & National)

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North Haven Schools, SA (Schools – State & National)

The North Haven ‘Dolphin Rangers’ club was awarded the national title for their engagement with local community to help protect marine animals in coastal areas. Involving 90 students from the North Haven primary and junior primary school, the club’s work aims to reduce plastic bag use in the local area, particularly working towards assisting the Torrens Island Sunday Market to become plastic bag free. The student’s efforts also raise money for the Port River Dolphin Sanctuary with the students setting up a regular stall and selling 10,000 reusable bags in one month alone. The students also won a competition by creating the slogan “Be fantastic – Lose plastic” that was printed on 50,000 multi-use bags promoted and sold across 4 local council areas.

QUEENSLAND

Redlands Tourism, QLD (Community Group – State & National) Redlands Tourism supports the North Stradbroke Island Sustainable Tourism Committee and is dedicated to eradicating plastic bags from North Stradbroke Island. The introduction of cornstarch biodegradable plastic bags that suit organic waste recovering systems was the starting point of the ‘Ban Plastic Bags on Straddie’ campaign. However, realising these were no substitute for reducing excessive usage, the committee also began an education and marketing campaign to change resident and visitor mindsets on plastic bag usage. Working partnerships were formed with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure its success, including the EPA Qld, Redland Shire council, Redlands Tourism, Tourism Queensland, other key tourism bodies. Their target is for 100% of NSI operators to no longer use plastic bags by the end of 2006, which has the support of all key stakeholders.

QUEENSLAND CONT.

Bribie Island Chamber of Commerce (Business)

The 'Bribie Bag' and supporting education and awareness campaign was initiated by the local Chamber of Commerce to help the island become a plastic bag free zone in an effort to reduce the impact discarded bags have on their precious marine environment and national park. It strives to involve all businesses on the island and targets residents and visitors through local media, town and retail signage, and an annual festival. The Island's two schools participated in a poster competition, with the winning designs turned into posters and provided to local retailers to reinforce the message. The Chamber aims to ensure all small businesses have the ability to purchase whatever quantities of The Bribie Bag they require, so they can be offered to their customers in place of single use plastic bags.

Hambledon State School (School)

Promoting the theme 'Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' as a waste minimisation strategy for the school, Hambledon School created a model of easy practice examples of how families and individuals can reduce their use of plastic bags. The multi-level, student-led action included school displays and newsletter articles on the issue. The school also engaged in the collection of unused plastic bags for re-use by the school, as well as a design competition using plastic bags as Christmas decorations. Promotion and sales of calico bags featuring the school logo were carried out in conjunction with exposure to the initiative at community events in the aim of highlighting their efforts. The school also engaged with local businesses, parent groups and the media to optimise the results. Their good, all round approach encourages both reduction and reuse, and sets an example for other schools.

Burke Shire Council (Government Authority)

Targeting members of the local community (adults & children) as well as visitors to the region, the Council issued each household and rural properties within their Shire, 5 free calico bags along with a flyer informing them of the importance of reducing plastic bag use. Local businesses were also offered the chance to purchase the calico bags at cost price for resale. This helped ensure that their community had reusable bags at no cost, whilst also ensuring alternatives were available in retail outlets. Proceeds from the sale of the calico bags were donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, providing customers with an added incentive of using reusable bags over plastic bags. Local media has also been used to promote the campaign.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Marrickville Council (Government Authority)

With over 100,000 plastic bags given away each year within the Marrickville Council area, their 'Bagbusters' campaign is an innovative educational program that aims to reduce the use of plastic bags. The 'Bagbusters' team consults with local retailers to design simple and cost effective plastic bag reduction strategies, further assisting them by sourcing alternative bags, providing signs and training staff. Public events and festivals are held to encourage shoppers to refuse plastic bags, and are also used to distribute free reusable bags to the public. Their educational flyers and other advertising materials are produced in 10 different languages, with local media, retail signage and volunteers providing a visible presence in the streets and at festivals to reinforce the message.

NEW SOUTH WALES CONT.

BANG Consortium Pty Ltd (Business)

The BANG Consortium has created the “Real Green Bag”, a reusable supermarket shopping bag made from jute which is a naturally biodegradable alternative to plastic bags and polypropylene ‘green’ bags. The bag also uses a fair trade manufacturing process, providing sustainable trade and employment support to vulnerable families in Bangladesh. The company has sold over 6,000 jute bags and is successfully working with small-to medium size retailers and local government groups to create branded shopping and bottle bags. They are also now working to introduce this alternative natural shopping bag to mainstream retailers.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Shire of Esperance, WA (Government Authority – State & National)

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Dandaragan Primary (School)

The ‘Think Smart, Act Smart, Bag Smart’ project involved 76 students from the school working in partnership with local businesses to reduce plastic bag use in Dandaragan. Plastic bag fact-sheets were compiled by students and distributed to parents and community members to educate them about the alternatives to plastic bags and the importance of this. Local media supported the initiative whilst the local Dandaragan store provided calico bags for students to decorate in class to encourage their use. A plastic bag free day was recently held at the store with great success, whilst the distribution of plastic bags has dropped dramatically and more plastic bag free days are planned.

Gascoyne Development Commission (Business)

Protecting the coastal, marine and world heritage listed landscapes and geography is vital to Gascoyne, which sees up to 110,000 visitors to the region each year. The plastic bag free project was established to help preserve the region’s precious environment at a local level. Launched with a series of public forums conducted by Bag Smart, the project involved a number of key stakeholders who set up working parties to communicate the importance of reducing plastic bag use and encourage alternatives to be used amongst retailers and consumers. A collaborative approach, using existing local events to promote the message ie: regional fishing events, helped target specific and key audiences, whilst support is also being provided to local retailers to help their transition towards becoming plastic bag free. This is a good example of a business addressing community needs and working towards the end goal together.

TASMANIA

Bridport Innovations Inc (Community Group)

Driven by two young women in the village to help protect the Bridport coastline, the 'Fantastic – No Plastic' campaign primarily targeted local residents and businesses to help introduce biodegradable and reusable bags into retailer outlets. Local school children were asked to create a design for the calico bags, which were provided free to every household, whilst a local business contributed the funds to cover the costs of the bags and also set up a large sign at the entrance of the village, to help communicate their intentions to the large influx of visitors who visit the town in the summer months. Local media and communication in retail outlets also helped support the message, resulting in a major change in shopper habits and a less littered environment. The largest supermarket in the village now uses 25% less bags & only provides biodegradable bags. However, their aim is to remove all plastic bags from retail outlets.

The Hutchins School (School)

Two students came up with the idea of making their school a plastic bag free zone. To involve the school community at all levels, students were asked to come up with a design for a calico bag with the theme 'Hutchins, we care'. Calico bags were printed with the winning designs and sold to the school community at cost price, to create an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic bags, and to raise awareness amongst students and the wider school community of the detrimental effects of plastic bag use on the environment. The project has not only created greater awareness of the problems associated with plastic bags, but has also decreased the amount of rubbish around the school in general, as students have become more environmentally conscious and keen to come up with other ways to help the environment beyond reducing plastic bags. A great example that other schools could easily follow.